



Indonesia

International Religious Freedom Report 2008

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The Constitution provides for freedom of religion. However, the Government officially recognized only six religions, and legal restrictions continued on certain types of religious activity, particularly among unrecognized religions and sects of recognized religions considered "deviant."

The Government generally respected religious freedom in practice. However, recommendations by government-appointed bodies and a subsequent government decree restricting the ability of the Ahmadiyya to practice freely were significant exceptions. In some cases the Government tolerated discrimination against and the abuse of religious groups by private actors and often failed to punish perpetrators, although the Government prevented several vigilante actions during Ramadan. Aceh remained the only province authorized to implement Islamic law (Shari'a). Many local governments outside of Aceh maintained laws with elements of Shari'a that abrogated the rights of women and religious minorities; however, no new Shari'a-inspired laws were known to have passed during the reporting period. Even though the central Government holds authority over religious matters, it failed to overturn any local laws that restricted rights guaranteed in the Constitution. Members of minority religious groups continued to experience some official discrimination in the form of administrative difficulties, often in the context of civil registration of marriages and births or the issuance of identity cards.

There were a number of reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. Some groups used violence and intimidation to force at least 12 churches and 21 Ahmadiyya mosques to close. Several churches and Ahmadiyya mosques remained closed after mobs forcibly shut them down in previous years. Some Muslim organizations and government officials called for the dissolution of the Ahmadiyya, resulting in some violence and discrimination against its followers. Some perpetrators of violence were undergoing trials during the reporting period. However, many perpetrators of past abuse against religious minorities were not brought to justice.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom with government and civil society leaders as part of its overall policy to promote human rights. The Embassy promoted religious freedom and tolerance through exchanges and civil society development.

Section I. Religious Demography

An archipelago of more than 17,000 islands, the country has an area of approximately 700,000 square miles and a population of 245 million.

According to a 2000 census report, 88 percent of the population is Muslim, 6 percent Protestant, 3 percent Roman Catholic, 2 percent Hindu, and less than 1 percent Buddhist, traditional indigenous religions, other Christian groups, and Jewish. Some Christians, Hindus, and members of other minority religious groups argued that the census undercounted non-Muslims.

Most Muslims in the country are Sunni. The two largest Muslim social organizations, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, claimed 40 million and 30 million Sunni followers, respectively. There are also an estimated 1 million to 3 million Shi'a.

Many smaller Muslim organizations exist, including approximately 400,000 persons who subscribe to the Ahmadiyya Qadiyani interpretation of Islam. A smaller group, known as Ahmadiyya Lahore, is also present.

Other Islamic minorities include al-Qiyadah al-Islamiya, Darul Arqam, Jamaah Salamulla (Salamulla Congregation), and members of the Indonesian Islamic Propagation Institute.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs estimates that 19 million Protestants (referred to locally as Christians) and 8 million Catholics live in the country. The province of East Nusa Tenggara has the highest proportion of Catholics at 55 percent. The province of Papua contains the highest proportion of Protestants at 58 percent. Other areas, such as the Maluku Islands and North Sulawesi, host sizable Christian communities.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs estimates that 10 million Hindus live in the country. Hindus account for approximately 90 percent of the population in Bali. Hindu minorities (called "Keharingan") reside in Central and East Kalimantan, the city of Medan (North Sumatra), South and Central Sulawesi, and Lombok (West Nusa Tenggara). Hindu groups such as Hare Krishna and followers of the Indian spiritual leader Sai Baba are also present, although in smaller numbers. Some indigenous religious groups, including the "Naurus" on Seram Island in Maluku Province, incorporate Hindu and animist beliefs into their practices. Many have also adopted some Protestant principles. The Tamil community in Medan represents another concentration of Hindus.

The country has a small Sikh population, estimated between 10,000 and 15,000. Sikhs reside primarily in Medan and Jakarta. Eight Sikh temples (gurdwaras) are located in North Sumatra, while Jakarta has two Sikh temples with active congregations.

Among Buddhists, approximately 60 percent follow the Mahayana school, Theravada followers account for 30 percent, and the remaining 10 percent belong to the Tantrayana, Tridharma, Kasogatan, Nichiren, or Maitreya schools. According to the Young Generation of Indonesian Buddhists, most believers live in Java, Bali, Lampung, West Kalimantan, and the Riau islands. Ethnic Chinese make up an estimated 60 percent of Buddhists.

The number of Confucians remains unknown because at the time of the 2000 national census, respondents were not allowed to identify themselves as such. The Supreme Council for Confucian Religion in Indonesia (MATAKIN) estimated that ethnic Chinese made up 95 percent of Confucians with the balance mostly indigenous Javanese. Many Confucians also practiced Buddhism and Christianity.

An estimated 20 million persons in Java, Kalimantan, Papua, and elsewhere practice animism and other types of traditional belief systems termed "Aliran Kepercayaan." Some animists combine their beliefs with one of the government-recognized religions.

There are very small Jewish communities in Jakarta and Surabaya. The Baha'i community reported thousands of members, but no reliable figures were available. Falun Dafa, which considers itself a spiritual organization rather than a religion, claims between 2,000 and 3,000 followers, nearly half of whom live in Yogyakarta, Bali, and Medan.

Section II. Status of Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion and accords "all persons the right to worship according to their own religion or belief." The Constitution states that "the nation is based upon belief in one supreme God." The first tenet of the country's national ideology, Pancasila, similarly declares belief in one God. Government employees must swear allegiance to the nation and to the Pancasila ideology. Other laws and policies placed some restrictions on certain types of religious activity, particularly among unrecognized religious groups and "deviant" sects of recognized religious groups. The Government did not use its constitutional authority to review or revoke local laws that violated freedom of religion.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs extends official status to six religious groups: Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism. Unrecognized groups may register with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism as social organizations. Although these groups have the right to establish a house of worship, obtain identity cards, and register marriages and births, they face administrative difficulties in doing

so. In some cases these challenges made it more difficult for individuals to seek employment or enroll children in school.

On June 9, 2008, the Government announced a joint ministerial decree freezing the activities of the Ahmadiyya Qadiyani (Ahmadiyya) and prohibiting vigilantism against the group. The decree was short of an outright ban for which hardline groups and a government-appointed body, the Coordinating Board for Monitoring Mystical Beliefs in Society (Bakor Pakem), were strongly advocating. The decree was signed by the Attorney General's Office, the Ministry of Religion, and the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Minister of Religious Affairs stated that violations of the ban on proselytizing would result in a maximum 5-year jail sentence under charges of blasphemy. Vice President Kalla stated that the decree did not prohibit the Ahmadiyya from worshipping or continuing to practice within its own community.

Prior to the government decree, Bakor Pakem issued a recommendation to the Government to dissolve the Ahmadiyya. The April 16, 2008, recommendation declared the group heretical and deviant, citing a 1965 presidential instruction on the "prevention of misuse and disgrace of religion." The Government delayed action on issuing a formal decree against the group amid pressure from civil society and Islamic organizations who claim the ban would be unconstitutional and contrary to the teachings of Islam.

The Indonesian Council of Ulamas (MUI) released a number of fatwas (religious decrees) in recent years on the issue of "deviance" from mainstream Islam, including recommendations to ban the Ahmadiyya, that were influential in enabling official and social discrimination against the Ahmadiyya and other minority religious groups during the reporting period.

The Government formed the MUI in 1975 and continued to fund and appoint its members, but MUI opinions are not legally binding. Nevertheless, the MUI's edicts or fatwas are designed to be moral guiding principles for Muslims and society, and the government seriously consider them when making decisions or drafting legislation. MUI's influence in restricting religious freedoms increased during the year, sometimes with government support.

In November 2007 the MUI issued a fatwa with 10 guidelines for determining deviant teachings. These included: disagreeing with any of the six core principles of Islam; acknowledging a prophet after Muhammad; and changing or modifying Islamic rituals such as performing the Hajj to a place other than Mecca or saying that prayer five times daily is not necessary. In October 2007 the MUI declared that the minority sect, al-Qiyadah al-Islamiyah, was deviant. It issued a similar fatwa against the Ahmadiyya in 2005.

A December 9, 2006, civil registration bill requires citizens to identify their religion on National Identity Cards (KTP). The bill does not allow citizens to identify themselves as anything outside of the six recognized religious groups. Legally citizens may leave this section blank, but some local government officials were not familiar with this option.

The Government requires officially recognized religious groups to comply with Ministry of Religious Affairs and other ministerial directives, such as the Revised Joint Ministerial Decree on the Construction of Houses of Worship (2006), Overseas Aid to Religious Institutions in Indonesia (1978), and the Guidelines for the Propagation of Religion (1978).

The 2006 Revised Joint Ministerial Decree on the Construction of Houses of Worship requires religious groups that want to build a house of worship to obtain the signatures of at least 90 members and 60 persons of other religious groups in the community stating that they support the establishment. The decree also requires obtaining approval from the local religious affairs office, the Forum for Religious Harmony (FKUB).

The Guidelines for Overseas Aid to Religious Institutions require domestic religious organizations to obtain approval from the Ministry of Religion to receive funding from overseas donors. The Guidelines for Propagation of Religion ban proselytizing under most circumstances.

The Government permits the practice of the traditional belief system of Aliran Kepercayaan as a cultural manifestation, not a religion. Aliran Kepercayaan groups must register with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Local authorities generally respect these adherents' right to practice. On June 28, 2007, the

Government issued Regulation No. 37/2007, which allows Aliran Kepercayaan officials to preside over marriage ceremonies and directs civil registration offices to register marriage licenses signed by such marriage officials, enabling these marriages to be legally recognized. The regulation was not implemented in all areas, however. At the end of the reporting period, the Surabaya Citizenship Department was waiting for either revision of the local regulation on civil administration and marriage or technical guidance from the Minister of Home Affairs before implementing the law.

The Child Protection Act of 2002 makes attempting to convert minors to a religion other than their own through "tricks" and/or "lies" a crime punishable by up to 5 years in prison.

Article 156 of the Criminal Code makes spreading hatred, heresy, and blasphemy punishable by up to 5 years in prison. Although the law applies to all officially recognized religions, the few cases in which it has been enforced have almost always involved blasphemy and heresy against Islam.

Many of the country's policies concerning religion are enacted and enforced at the subnational level. Since October 2005 the regional representative office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in West Nusa Tenggara upheld a ban on 13 religious groups, including the Ahmadiyya, Jehovah's Witness, Hare Krishna, and 9 forms of Aliran Kepercayaan as being deviations of Islam, Christianity, or Hinduism. The West Nusa Tenggara Board for Monitoring Mystical Beliefs in Society (Pakem NTB) closely monitored Ahmadiyya members in Mataram during the reporting period. There were no reports, however, on how the restriction affected the other banned groups in the region. In West Java a joint decree issued in January 2005 in the Kuningan regency restricted the propagation of Ahmadiyya teachings. On May 5, 2008, Pakem West Java recommended municipal authorities ban Ahmadiyya. On May 6, 2008, the Mayor of Cimahi, West Java, issued an order to ban the religious group.

Aceh remained the only province for which the central government specifically authorized Shari'a law. Presidential Decree 11/2003 formally established Shari'a courts in Aceh; however, according to data from the Indonesian Women's Coalition, there have been no new Shari'a ordinances implemented since 2006.

Although not specifically classified as Shari'a ordinances, many local governments across the country maintained Shari'a-inspired regulations. According to the Indonesian Women's Coalition, local governments throughout the country have issued at least 100 such ordinances. Many Muslim scholars and human rights activists claim that these ordinances have created or increased discrimination against women. In many cases these laws require Muslim women to wear headscarves in public; mandate elected Muslim officials, students, civil servants, and individuals seeking marriage licenses to be able to read the Qur'an in Arabic; and prohibit Muslims from drinking alcohol and gambling. Some of these laws were attempts to deal with local social problems, and in many cases the laws were not enforced.

Civil rights activists assert that such Shari'a-based ordinances violate the Constitution and have called on the Government to exercise its constitutional jurisdiction to revoke or review these ordinances. On February 14, 2008, the Minister of Home Affairs claimed Shari'a bylaws did not exist and that the so-called Shari'a-inspired ordinances were merely public order laws passed to deal with social problems such as drinking and prostitution. With regard to Aceh, the Minister said the disputed regulations only applied to Muslims, obliging them to conduct their daily lives in accordance with Islamic teachings.

During the reporting period in Padang, West Sumatra, the mayor instructed all Muslim students to wear Islamic dress on Fridays and encouraged Muslim city officials to do so as well. Many, however, did not comply, and there was no penalty for noncompliance.

Several regencies maintained regulations preventing Muslim women from receiving government services if they were not wearing headscarves. These regulations remained on the books but were routinely not enforced.

Several regencies in South Sulawesi have Shari'a laws on the books. In Bulukumba Regency, South Sulawesi, the laws, which apply only to Muslims, include obligatory Islamic dress, a requirement to read the Qur'an in Arabic, regulations on tithing, and a ban on liquor. In most cases there are no sanctions for noncompliance, and the laws are not enforced.

Regulations in the Pamekasan Regency of Madura call for Muslim civil servants to wear Islamic attire and the

cessation of both public and work activities during the call to prayer. Reportedly, however, not all residents obeyed this regulation, and there was no clear sanction for non-compliance.

Tangerang Regency in Banten Province bans prostitution and public displays of affection. These bans apply to both Muslims and non-Muslims. The controversial prostitution clause vaguely defines a prostitute as anyone drawing suspicion based on his or her attitude, behavior, or dress, and places the burden on suspected women to prove their innocence. Consequences spelled out by the ban include a fine of up to \$1,655 (Rp. 15,000,000) or jail terms of up to 3 months, and a return to their family for unspecified "guidance." Advocacy groups challenged the constitutionality of Tangerang's regulation, but in March 2007 the Supreme Court upheld the prohibition. The ban is no longer implemented, according to rights activists.

As in previous reporting periods, during the Islamic fasting month of Ramadan, many local governments ordered either the closure or a reduction in operating hours of various entertainment establishments. In 2007 the MUI Surabaya Chapter, local government, and Interfaith Forum issued letters to all nighttime entertainment establishments asking them to close operations during Ramadan. Similar regulations applied in Jakarta and other parts of Indonesia. Regional governments, city administrations, and hardline groups sometimes employed force in imposing these regulations, although in many cases police prevented vigilante groups from taking action. Some members of minority religious groups, as well as some Muslims, believed these orders infringed on their rights.

The 1974 Marriage Law makes polygamy illegal for civil servants, except in limited circumstances. Marriage law for Muslims draws from Shari'a and allows a man to have up to four wives, provided he is able to support each equally. For a man to take a second, third, or fourth wife, he must obtain court permission and the consent of the first wife; however, these conditions are not always required in practice. Many women reportedly encountered societal pressures that made permission difficult to refuse, and Islamic women's groups remain divided over whether the system needed revision. On October 3, 2007, the Constitutional Court upheld a spouse's right to deny a husband's demand to take on additional wives, ruling that restrictions on polygamy in the Marriage Law violated neither the Constitution nor tenets of Islam and were necessary to protect the rights of women.

A special committee of Parliament continued to review a revised version of a highly controversial draft pornography bill, which includes language that opponents characterized as an attempt by proponents of Shari'a law to implement Shari'a indirectly. The special committee made no progress toward forwarding the draft law for full parliamentary consideration during the reporting period. Civil rights advocates continued to debate the merit of the proposed law.

Divorce remained a legal option available to members of all religions, but Muslims seeking divorce generally had to turn to the Islam-based family court system while non-Muslims obtained a divorce through the national court system. In divorce cases women often bear a heavier evidentiary burden than men, especially in the Islam-based family court system. The law requires the former husband to provide alimony or its equivalent, but no enforcement mechanism exists, and divorced women rarely receive such support.

Based on Law 17/1999, the Government has a monopoly on the organization of the Hajj to Mecca. The law states that the Ministry of Religious Affairs is responsible for providing guidance, service, and protection to Hajj pilgrims during their pilgrimage. The Ministry also determines the costs associated with the Hajj and issues a Hajj passport.

On April 1, 2008, the House of Representatives passed a bill reaffirming the Government's role as the single Hajj organizer. Despite many complaints from various sides about alleged corruption, poor management, and inadequate service, the new law states the Religious Affairs Ministry will continue to manage the pilgrimage. The law requires the Government to form an independent supervisory committee to monitor the Hajj management. The Indonesian Hajj Supervisory Committee would consist of nine members--three government officials and the remaining six from other institutions, including the MUI. The three officials in the committee would be comprised of a member of the Religious Affairs Ministry, the Health Ministry, and the Indonesian Embassy in Saudi Arabia.

In 2003 the Government passed the National Education Law, which mandates religious instruction in any one of the six official religions when requested by a student. On October 5, 2007, the President signed the

regulation.

The Government bans proselytizing, arguing that such activity, especially in religiously diverse areas, could prove disruptive.

Religious speeches are permissible if they are delivered to members of the same religious group and are not intended to convert persons of other religious groups.

Televised religious programming remained unrestricted, and viewers could watch religious programs offered by any of the recognized religious groups.

No restrictions exist on the publication of religious materials or the use of religious symbols; however, the Government bans dissemination of these materials to persons of other religious groups.

Religious groups and social organizations must obtain permits to hold religious concerts or other public events. The Government usually granted permits in an unbiased manner unless a concern existed that the activity could anger members of another religious group in the area.

Foreign missionaries must obtain religious worker visas, and foreign religious organizations must obtain permission from the Ministry of Religious Affairs to provide any type of assistance (in-kind, personnel, or financial) to local religious groups.

The law does not discriminate against any religious group in employment, housing, or health care.

The Government observes the Ascension of the Prophet, Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, the Muslim New Year, the Birth of the Prophet Muhammad, Christmas, Good Friday, the Ascension of Christ, the Buddhist holiday Waisak, the Chinese New Year (celebrated by Confucians and other Chinese), and the Hindu holiday Nyepi as national holidays. Additional Hindu holy days are recognized as regional holidays in Bali, and Balinese do not work on Saraswati Day, Galungan, and Kuningan.

During the reporting period, several government officials and prominent political leaders interacted in public forums and seminars with religious leaders and interfaith groups such as Muhammadiyah's International Peace Forum and various seminars sponsored by the Indonesian Conference on Religion and Peace, the Indonesian Anti-Discrimination Movement, and National People's Solidarity (Solidaritas Nusa Bangsa).

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

The Government generally respected religious freedom; however, recommendations by government-appointed bodies and a government decree restricting the ability of the Ahmadiyya to practice freely were a significant exception. Certain other laws, policies, and official actions also restricted religious freedom, and the Government sometimes tolerated private actors' discrimination against and abuse of individuals based on their religious belief.

Local governments issued bans against Ahmadiyya, al-Qiyadah al-Islamiyah, and other minority Islamic sects during the reporting period and monitored them closely, frequently at the request of local MUI chapters.

The June 9, 2008, government decree on the Ahmadiyya that bans proselytizing and practices deemed to be "deviant" from mainstream Islam came 5 months after a government-appointed team began monitoring the Ahmadiyya at the request of MUI. Civil society activists have said that passage of the decree was the most recent example of an escalating effort by Islamic hardliners to restrict the practice of the Ahmadiyya.

On April 19, 2008, approximately 350 Ahmadiyya members from 200 chapters throughout the country were forced to cancel their national conference in Bali. Ahmadiyya spokesperson Syamsir Ali said the Bali Police would not issue them a permit on the grounds of security following Bakor Pakem's decision to recommend a joint decree restricting Ahmadiyya practices.

In November 2007 the Bangka Belitung local government asked Ahmadiyya to stop all public activities due to complaints from the local community. This action affected approximately 17 households of Ahmadiyya followers.

The Government requires all adult citizens to carry a KTP, which among other things, identifies the holder's religion. While members of unrecognized religious groups may legally leave this section blank, in practice they are often unable to obtain KTPs unless they identify themselves as belonging to a recognized religious group. Human rights groups continued to receive sporadic reports of local civil registry officials who rejected applications submitted by members of unrecognized or minority religious groups. Others accepted applications but issued KTPs that inaccurately reflected the applicants' religion. For example, some animists received KTPs that listed their religion as Islam. Many Sikhs registered as Hindu on their KTPs and marriage certificates. Some citizens without a KTP had difficulty finding work. Several nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and religious advocacy groups continued to urge the Government to delete the religion category from the KTPs, but no progress was made.

The civil registration system discriminates against persons who do not belong to the six recognized religious groups. Animists, Baha'is, and members of other small minority religious groups found it difficult to register marriages or births, notwithstanding the June 2007 regulation pertaining to marriage and civil administration, which allowed Aliran Kepercayaan marriages to be officially recognized. According to the Trimulya Foundation, an NGO that advocates for rights of Aliran Kepercayaan followers, adherents were sometimes unable to register marriages. Some national government officials said this was because of a lack of understanding of the regulations on the side of both the applicant and the local government administrator.

Men and women of different religions also continued to face obstacles to marrying and officially registering their marriages. Such couples had difficulty finding a religious official willing to perform the ceremony, which is required before registering a marriage. As a result, some persons converted in order to marry. Others traveled overseas, where they wed and then registered the marriage at an Indonesian Embassy. Despite being among the officially recognized religious groups, Hindus stated that they frequently had to travel long distances to have their marriages registered, because in many rural areas the local government could not or would not perform the registration.

In practice couples prevented from registering their marriage or the birth of a child sometimes converted to one of the recognized religions or misrepresented themselves as belonging to one of the six. Those who chose not to register their marriages or births risked future difficulties, such as obtaining birth certificates for children. Birth certificates are required for school enrollment, scholarships, and government employment.

Since the Government promulgated the Revised Joint Ministerial Decree on the Construction of Houses of Worship in 2006, implementation and defense of rights conferred under the decree have not always been enforced at the local level. During the reporting period, some Christian and Hindu groups pointed to sporadic acts of discrimination in which local authorities refused to authorize the building of churches and temples even though the groups managed to collect the necessary signatures. For example, in the regency of Langkat, North Sumatra, local authorities delayed Catholic officials from building a church, despite the officials having met the legal requirements to do so. The issue was ultimately solved through mediation with the FKUB. While local FKUBs are designed to serve as interfaith forums, they were often dominated by the majority religious group, which could oppose or stall provision of licenses to minority groups. In several cases in West Java, small churches faced difficulties obtaining licenses, frequently due to opposition in the FKUB.

The Hindu Association reported their continuing inability to build a temple in Tangerang, West Java, despite obtaining the required signatures. On November 19, 2007, the local government cancelled the permit for the construction of a Hindu temple in Pura Penataran Agung Rinjani, Bayan, and West Lombok. On January 16, hundreds of protestors from the majority Muslim Sasak community attacked a Hindu temple in Pura Sangkareang, Keru, Narmada subdistrict, West Lombok. The attack caused minor damage but succeeded in stopping renovations that had been underway. Police made arrests but released the protestors on the basis of too little evidence.

In Aceh efforts to educate the public about and enforce Shari'a law continued. Not all local governments in Aceh have dedicated Shari'a police, but the province's Shari'a office is active in all local governments. During Ramadan several districts including Banda Aceh issued regulations ordering shopkeepers to close their businesses for midday prayers, and restaurants remained closed all day. Not all businesses and restaurants

complied with these regulations. Throughout the reporting period, the Shari'a office and religious police worked jointly with the civil police to investigate and prosecute violations. At times the Shari'a police publicly lectured persons caught wearing improper Islamic dress in public or dating without an escort, but in these cases police generally did not arrest or charge them with crimes. In several districts throughout the province, Shari'a police established roadblocks, usually in conjunction with the local police, to confirm that passersby were wearing Islamic attire.

Some Christian groups state that Christian missionaries find it difficult to obtain or extend visas. Requirements for religious worker visas are more onerous than for other visa categories. In addition to requiring approval from each office of the Department of Religion from the local to national level, information on the number of followers of the religion in the community and a statement by the applicant confirming that the applicant would work no more than 2 years in the country before being replaced by a local citizen are also required. Foreign missionaries granted such visas worked relatively unimpeded. Many missionaries with a primary focus on development work successfully registered for social visas with the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Education.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

During the reporting period, the Government continued to explicitly and implicitly restrict the religious freedom of groups associated with forms of Islam viewed as outside the mainstream.

The Government tolerated discrimination and abuse toward the Ahmadiyya by remaining silent on the 2007 MUI fatwa containing guidelines condemning Islamic groups such as the Ahmadiyya who profess belief in a prophet after Muhammad, the 2005 MUI fatwa that explicitly banned the Ahmadiyya, and local government bans. Varying reports provided different numbers of mosques attacked or closed. However, according to national Ahmadiyya spokespersons, during the reporting period, 21 Ahmadiyya mosques were forced to close around the country; 15 were closed in West Java alone. The June 2008 joint ministerial decree on the Ahmadiyya responded to calls to address the group's rights. For the most part, Ahmadiyya followers have been allowed to continue worshiping, although some mosques were closed after the decree. However, because of the decree, Ahmadiyya followers are not free to proselytize or otherwise practice their faith publicly.

Local sources reported 2 Ahmadiyya camps in Lombok housed 194 internally displaced persons (IDPs) who have been living in the camps since attacks by local Muslims destroyed their homes and mosques in early 2006. There were approximately 137 Ahmadiyya IDPs living in Transito Camp and 57 in Praya Camp at the end of the reporting period. One family from the Praya Camp returned home briefly, only to return to the camp shortly thereafter due to threats of violence. Four of the families displaced in 2006 relocated with family members in South Sulawesi. Sources within the Ministry of Religion reported 150 IDPs living in the camps, of whom 80 had been repatriated back to their homes.

Although irregular and limited in scope, the local government continued to provide rice assistance to the IDPs. The local government did not have any plans to return them to their home village. Sources said the local government had done nothing to resolve the issue and that the central Government needed to step in. The local Ahmadiyya chapter sent a letter to the Minister of Religion requesting concrete action.

The Ahmadiyya families say they will not return to their homes because they fear local government officials cannot guarantee their safety. Camp conditions remained difficult with cramped living space and limited access to water. Although children have been able to attend local schools since 2006, they faced harassment.

During the reporting period, the Shari'a court in Aceh reported a total of 36 canings, all of which were for gambling.

Despite police presence, municipal public order officers ransacked food stalls and coffee shops that operated during daylight hours during Ramadan in Pekanbaru, Riau. The city administration in Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan, also raided and arrested food stall vendors. These detained vendors were reportedly fined \$55 (Rp. 500,000) each or faced 3 months' detention.

On April 5, 2008, police in Central Sulawesi shot and killed the leader of a Madi sect, who was also named

Madi, when he forcefully resisted arrest. Police questioned three persons, whom they later released.

During the reporting period, the Government arrested and charged individuals with heresy, blasphemy, and insulting Islam.

On May 2, 2008, the Padang District Court sentenced two local al-Qiyadah al-Islamiyah sect activists, Dedi Priadi and Gerry Lufthi Yudistira, to 3 years in prison for blasphemy.

On April 23, 2008, the South Jakarta District Court sentenced al-Qiyadah al-Islamiyah leader Ahmad Moshaddeq to 4 years in prison for blasphemy. The Court said Moshaddeq, who had claimed to be a prophet, was guilty of violating an article of the Criminal Code on hostility, misuse, and defamation against religion.

On November 2, 2007, Sidoarjo police arrested al-Qiyadah al-Islamiyah's East Java leader Ari Cahyono. On the same day, 21 of the group's followers asked for protection by the East Java Police. The police allegedly declined and instead required them to provide a letter stating they would not spread their teachings to others.

On October 30, 2007, the leader of the Jamaah Alamulla Group, Lia Eden, was released from prison after serving 16 months of a 24-month sentence for "denigrating religion." In November 2007 the Supreme Court sentenced Abdul Rahman, Lia Eden's son, who claimed to be the reincarnation of Prophet Muhammad, to 3 years in prison.

On October 22, 2007, hundreds of persons raided the houses of three al-Qiyadah al-Islamiyah followers in Gresik, East Java. Police subsequently detained the al-Qiyadah members on suspicion of blasphemy. The raid followed the Gresik Chapter of the MUI's issuance of an edict on October 6, 2007, stating that al-Qiyadah al-Islamiyah is heretical, since it does not accept Muhammad as the last prophet or require prayer five times a day. By the end of October 2007, East Java Police arrested eight al-Qiyadah members on suspicion of blasphemy charges.

On September 6, 2007, the Malang District Court sentenced 41 persons to 5 years in prison for blasphemy relating to dissemination of a "prayer training" video produced by the College Student Service Organization in Batu, East Java. The video, distributed in early 2007, allegedly depicted 30 Christians being instructed by their leader to put Qur'ans on the floor at a 2006 gathering.

In May 2006 the Banyuwangi, East Java, regional legislature voted to oust Banyuwangi's Regent, Ratna Ani Lestari, from office. Those in favor of the ouster accused Ratna, a Muslim by birth, of blaspheming Islam by practicing a different religion from the one stated on her identity card. Ratna's supporters stated that she was the target of a religiously motivated smear campaign. Ratna stayed in office throughout the reporting period, because the regional legislature failed to submit a petition for her dismissal to the Supreme Court. During the reporting period, protests against her administration focused not on her religious background but her policies.

According to confirmed reports, extremist groups used violence and intimidation to close at least 12 churches during the reporting period. Groups also delayed and in some cases blocked petitions for churches to complete renovations. Small churches in West Java were under the most pressure, including in areas of Bandung, Tangerang, and Bekasi. At least 5 of the 12 churches known to have closed during the reporting period did so due to pressure from nonresident hardline religious groups, while the remaining 7 closed due to pressure from the local community. In at least two cases, the local government urged churches to close as a result of pressure from the local community, although it was unknown in these cases whether the pressure originated with nonresident hardline groups or local ulama. While often present, police rarely acted to prevent forced church closings and in the past had sometimes assisted militant groups in the closure.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the refusal to allow such citizens to return to the United States.

Abuses by Rebel or Foreign Forces or Terrorist Organizations

There were no abuses by terrorist organizations during the reporting period. The Government made progress on prosecutions of individuals for acts of interreligious violence under the antiterrorism law and related charges for incidents in Central Sulawesi and Ambon between 2004 and 2006.

Improvements and Positive Developments in Respect for Religious Freedom

Representatives of the Confucian community confirmed their ability to practice their religion as well as obtain marriage certificates and identity cards with Confucianism listed as their religion. In 2006 Confucianism was recognized by the Government. During the reporting period MATAKIN drafted Confucian religious education curricula per the October 2007 government regulation requiring schools to provide religious education in each of the six recognized religious groups according to students' needs.

There were notable efforts in several provinces to build interfaith harmony. The Government of North Sumatra continued to sponsor the Forum for Communal Harmony, an organization which united representatives of all recognized religious groups and promoted interfaith dialogue as a way of avoiding religious conflict. The national Government mandated all provinces establish similar bodies, and many did so throughout the reporting period. Former President Abdurrahman Wahid attended the Bali Holocaust Conference on June 12, 2007, in which interfaith leaders denounced holocaust denial and promoted religious freedom.

During the reporting period, there were no reports of religiously motivated violence in Maluku and North Maluku. Religiously motivated violence was at its height in the late 1990s and had continued at a lesser scale in subsequent years.

Leaders of both the Muslim and Christian communities and the Maluku provincial government continued to demonstrate their strong commitment to ease religious tension, which had led to significant violence in past years, and to rebuild. For example, the Maluku Police Chief visited mosques and churches to promote community reconciliation among Muslim and Christian communities. Several government projects to replace damaged churches, mosques, and homes continued during the reporting period. The local government implemented economic recovery and conflict rehabilitation programs using a \$300 million (Rp. 2.3 trillion) presidential allocation. The Maluku government took steps to strengthen coordination with civil society around social problems arising from local conflict and terrorist violence during the reporting period. In March 2008 it held a workshop on "National Unity Building and Awareness of Conflict and Terrorist Threats" aimed at developing bridges between civil society and the local government for dealing with potential conflicts; however, these steps did not always include grassroots communities.

In contrast to previous reporting periods, there were no major incidents of violence in Poso Regency, Central Sulawesi. Police cracked down on and arrested several suspects accused of terrorism and other violent crimes related to interreligious strife in Central Sulawesi from previous reporting periods. Local police in Central Sulawesi protected local churches and prayer houses during religious services. Local residents expressed optimism that the cycle of violence has slowed.

During the reporting period, the Government successfully tried and convicted more than 50 suspects of terrorism, including individuals on the U.S. State Department's terrorist watch list and other militants not known to be affiliated with officially recognized terrorist organizations. Those suspects tried, convicted, and facing trial include several affiliated with Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and Christian and Muslim residents involved in violence against members of other religious groups and/or police, including the past interreligious violence in Central Sulawesi. The Court also declared JI to be a "forbidden corporation" in the ruling, although this pronouncement did not lead to further action by the Government by the end of the reporting period.

Other militants included in the total sentenced during the reporting period include 13 tried and convicted for the 2006 and 2004 killings of two clergy, the 2005 beheading of three Christian schoolgirls, and the 2005 bombings of markets in Tentena, Palu, and Central Sulawesi. Also in December 2007 seven others were given sentences between 10 and 19 years imprisonment for their involvement in the Central Sulawesi attacks.

On July 26, 2007, 17 Central Sulawesi Christians accused of killing 2 Muslim men in 2006 were sentenced by the South Jakarta District Court to between 8 and 14 years in prison.

Another militant included in the total convicted during the reporting period is Sulthon Qolbi, who was given a 15-year sentence on October 4, 2007, by the Ambon State Court for religiously motivated attacks in Maluku.

Qolbi was involved with Kompak, a militant Islamic group known for attacking Christians, and was responsible for a series of attacks in 2005, such as the Lokki attack, the grenade explosion in Batu Merah village, and the bomb explosion in Mardika market.

Police reportedly negotiated with hardline groups in some areas, resulting in de-escalated situations during Ramadan. Despite these efforts, however, in several cases they failed to prevent closures and attacks. Police arrested several members of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) in many instances and in various places across the country who planned vigilante "raiding" of entertainment establishments during Ramadan. This represented an improvement from previous years when police did not do so.

Section III. Societal Abuses and Discrimination

There were a number of reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. In December 2007 and again in April 2008, the Chief of Police announced that police would protect minority groups across the country, including the Ahmadiyya, but failed to prevent several closures and attacks, particularly in West Java.

Controversy over the Ahmadiyya continued throughout the reporting period. Hardline groups renewed attacks on Ahmadiyya, particularly in West Java, with the destruction of the group's second largest mosque and adjoining school. These attacks took place despite protection from local police. Additionally, hardline groups threatened senior NU clerics in Cirebon, West Java, for speaking out against a ban.

Hardline religious groups further demanded the Government act quickly to disband the Ahmadiyya and threatened to do so independently if the Government failed to act. Various rallies took place throughout the country both for and against the ban. Civil rights activists, members of the Presidential Advisory Council, and some leaders from Muhammadiyah and Nadhlatul Ulama spoke out claiming such a ban would be unconstitutional and contrary to the principles of Islam. According to media reports and Ahmadiyya sources, after the June 2008 joint decree prohibiting some Ahmadiyya practices, as well as acts of vigilantism and violence against Ahmadiyya, hardline groups in some areas vandalized or closed 20 Ahmadiyya mosques. Women's groups reported continued discrimination against Ahmadiyya women and children whose schools were forced to close.

On June 1, 2008, approximately 1,000 persons rallied at the National Monument in Jakarta (Monas) to defend the rights of Ahmadiyya to practice their faith. The event was ambushed by members of Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia, Islamic Community Forum (FUI), and FPI, who attacked participants with bamboo sticks and stones. More than 70 persons involved in the rally were seriously injured. Police made no arrests at the scene and did not intervene until the attacks had already been carried out. Ten suspects were arrested and remained under investigation while in custody by the end of the reporting period.

On April 27, 2008, there were several reports of violence against Ahmadiyya members and its facilities, including the burning of the group's second largest mosque in Sukabumi, West Java, Al Furqon. An elementary school belonging to Ahmadiyya in the same compound was also destroyed. At least 21 Ahmadiyya mosques were forced to close, 15 of them in West Java. The national Government, moderate Islamic groups, and civil society all condemned the violence. Local police, although deployed to protect the facilities, failed to stop the attacks. Local police in Sukabumi detained 12 persons for their alleged participation in the mosque burning, although no charges were filed by the end of the reporting period.

On April 26, 2008, leaders of several Islamic Boarding Schools in Pasuruan, East Java, tried unsuccessfully to force the Government to forbid all types of Ahmadiyya activities.

On April 24, 2008, 28 youth and religious organizations in East Java protested a possible government ban on the Ahmadiyya saying it would be unconstitutional. On April 20, 2008, 14 NGOs in East Java from the East Java Anti-Discrimination Islamic Network held a press conference and issued a statement to the media claiming that disbanding Ahmadiyya violated human rights and was unconstitutional, and they vowed to protect Ahmadiyya members who felt threatened.

On December 19, 2007, a small mosque and dozens of houses belonging to Ahmadiyya members were attacked by the anti-Ahmadiyya movement Gerah in the village of Manis Lor, Kuningan, West Java. Four

persons were injured.

Unlike in West Java, Ahmadiyya members in West Nusa Tenggara did not request police protection and claimed not to fear attacks. Ahmadiyya in Surabaya and Madiun, East Java, were also reportedly conducting business as usual. In addition, a number of NU clerics from Surabaya, East Java, and Majalengka, West Java, offered their support for Ahmadiyya.

In addition to the Ahmadiyya, there were also incidents involving other minority Muslim groups. In Padang, West Sumatra, the Shari'a Enforcement Commission, a private entity founded by a businessman, spoke out against and threatened to act on small Muslim groups such as Amatol Islamiyah and al-Qiyadah al-Islamiyah. Activities by the commission against these groups included tearing down signs over their places of worship.

According to the Indonesian Communion of Churches and the Indonesian Bishops Conference, militant groups forced the closing of at least 12 licensed and unlicensed churches across the country. The FPI, the Anti-Apostate Movement Alliance (AGAP), Anti-Apostate Front (BAP), and the Anti-Apostate Division of the FUI backed by some local Muslim communities, orchestrated many of the church closings.

Many of the targeted churches operated in private homes and storefronts, and some churches moved their services to rented spaces in public shopping malls to avoid threats from hardline groups.

On February 15, 2008, approximately 60 demonstrators from 4 local mosques demanded the closure of the Love Evangelical Bethel Church (Gereja Bethel Injil Kasih Karunia) in Tangkerang Labuai village, Bukit Raya District, Pekanbaru, Riau Province. The protestors demanded that the church close because it did not have a permit for the expansion it was planning. According to the church pastor, the church did not have an expansion permit, but it had registered with the local Office of Religious Affairs in 1984.

On November 23, 2007, locals and officials prevented members of a Catholic church in Tambora, West Jakarta, from holding services in their 40-year-old church. During the reporting period, residents objected to plans to enlarge the small church. The church was applying for a building permit. On December 1, 2007, the church received assurances from the Ministry of Religious Affairs that it could continue to operate despite not having a permit.

On November 18, 2007, dozens of persons from the BAP and the AGAP vandalized the Pasundan Christian Church at Dayeuhkolot in Bandung, West Java. Police arrested four persons but then released them after interrogations. On December 2, 2007, there was another attack on the same church but Bandung Police were at the scene before the attackers. No one was arrested because the attackers quickly dispersed after seeing the police there.

On September 12, 2007, worshipers at a house church in Sukatani Permai Housing Complex in Tangerang Regency, Banten Province, resumed services after signing an agreement with the neighborhood council. Local officials from MUI, FKUB, and the Banten Provincial Representative from the Ministry of Religious Affairs witnessed the signing, which guaranteed that the church members could practice freely. The agreement was issued after approximately 300 local residents stormed and vandalized a house turned into a church during a service and injured a pastor and a congregation member on September 2, 2007.

On July 20, 2007, thousands of protestors demonstrated at Karmel Valley, a Catholic retreat in Cianjur, West Java, forcing the management to cancel an international religious gathering scheduled for July 24-29, 2007. Protestors claimed the planned gathering of the Holy Trinity group at Karmel Valley was illegal, despite the Holy Trinity group having a police permit for the gathering.

Several houses of worship, religious schools, and homes of Muslim groups regarded as unorthodox were attacked, vandalized, forced to shut down, or prevented from being established by militant groups and mobs throughout the country. In several cases police temporarily detained members of "deviant groups" who were victims of attacks, ostensibly in order to ensure their safety, but did not arrest attackers.

On April 2, 2008, in response to *Fitna*, a film critical of the Qur'an and produced by Dutch opposition

parliamentarian Geert Wilders, 50 students from the Indonesian Muslim Student Association attacked the Dutch Consulate to protest. At the end of the reporting period, eight of the students were undergoing trial for damaging the consulate.

On January 16, 2008, the Banten Chapter of MUI issued a fatwa pronouncing the teachings of Nursyahidin Salim, head of Miftahul Huda Pesantren, deviant. On December 13, 2007, angry mobs attacked the boarding school in Baros village, Serang Regency, Banten Province, accusing the pesantren head of promoting a deviant strain of Islam and setting fire to several rooms and vehicles in the school. Opponents protested Nursyahidin's use of religious rituals that deviated from mainstream Islamic practices.

On January 13, 2008, hundreds of persons surrounded a house in Ampenan village, West Nusa Tenggara, demanding that Shi'a followers stop a celebration in the name of Prophet Muhammad's grandson, Hussein. The Mataram mayor and head of the Ampenan village successfully dispersed the crowd before an attack took place, and police secured the area.

On November 6, 2007, approximately 100 persons from Enclek Sebrang residence, Surya Bahari village, Tangerang Regency, Banten Province, attacked the Nurul Yaqin Koran Recital Group, whom local ulamas accused of unorthodoxy. The head of Tangerang police temporarily detained 40 followers of Nurul Yaqin but made no arrests against the attackers.

On September 19, 2007, a group destroyed the Indonesian Institute of Islamic Propagation's (LDII) under-construction mosque in Tanggul Wetan village, Jember Regency, East Java. At a meeting with local inhabitants 1 day before the attack, LDII followers agreed not to build a new mosque and to demolish LDII's then-under-construction mosque by no later than September 23, 2007. The mosque was attacked during Ramadan after LDII followers finished prayers. Three days after the incident, the FKUB, the LDII, the Jember Chapter of MUI, and local leaders held a reconciliation meeting, where attendees agreed to end the dispute.

Muslims sometimes reported difficulties in establishing mosques in Muslim-minority areas of Papua, North Sulawesi, and elsewhere.

Hardline religious groups used pressure, intimidation, or violence against those whose message they found offensive. Groups such as FUI, Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia, and FPI threatened senior NU clerics in Cirebon West Java who opposed banning Ahmadiyya. Militants purporting to uphold public morality sometimes attacked cafes and nightclubs that they considered venues for prostitution or that had not made payments to extremist groups, although the number of such incidents decreased compared to previous years. In November 2007 the Ministry of Religious Affairs persuaded Egyptian Islamic scholar Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd to cancel a seminar in Malang, East Java, because many conservative groups opposed Abu Zayd's theological perspectives, according to press reports. The scholar's works are used in several major East Java religious schools.

Unforced conversions between religious groups occurred, as allowed by law, but they remained a source of controversy. Some Muslims accused Christian missionaries of using food and microcredit programs to lure poor Muslims to convert. Some converts felt compelled not to publicize their conversions for family and social reasons.

Approximately 100 members of the FPI also attacked food stalls open during daylight hours during Ramadan in Ciamis, West Java.

On February 12, 2008, Buya Mas'oed Abidin, chairman of the West Sumatra MUI, urged Muslims to refrain from celebrating Valentine's Day because it undermined the country's culture and values.

A survey by the Indonesian Survey Institute revealed that more than 30 percent of Muslims did not want Jews as neighbors.

Sabili, a widely read Islamic magazine, continued to publish articles with anti-Semitic statements and themes, and it alleged the existence of conspiratorial "Zionist" activities in the country.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom with the Government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights.

The U.S. Embassy in Jakarta, consulate general in Surabaya, and consulate in Medan regularly engaged government officials on specific religious freedom issues, and also encouraged officials from other missions to discuss the subject with the Government. Embassy staff at all levels met frequently with religious leaders and human rights advocates to promote respect for religious freedom. Embassy staff met members of minority religious groups, whose houses of worship were forcefully closed, to discuss religious pluralism. Embassy staff met regularly with NU and Muhammadiyah officials to clarify U.S. policy in support of religious freedom and discuss religious tolerance and other issues.

Embassy and consulate outreach to the public emphasized the importance of religious freedom and tolerance in a democratic and diverse society. During the reporting period, the Embassy and consulates promoted pluralism and tolerance through exchanges and civil society programs.

During the reporting period, 14 Indonesians visited the United States on short-term programs that incorporated discussions of religious freedom in the United States and Indonesia. The programs allowed participants to engage in dialogue with U.S. counterparts about the integral role of religious pluralism, interfaith dialogue, and multiculturalism in a democratic society, in order to promote the concept of religious freedom in the country. For example, one citizens exchange program offered 12 Indonesian Islamic scholars the opportunity to meet peers in the United States. They examined U.S. democracy as well as discussed religious freedom, civic involvement, religious education, and Islam in the world today, and related those issues to U.S. and Indonesian society. Furthering the program, five U.S. scholars committed to interfaith dialogue and cultural understanding visited with a wide variety of local leaders, teachers, and students, representing the country's major religious groups, in Palembang, Yogyakarta, and Jakarta. They specifically promoted the idea of religious freedom, and were the subject of an article in the *Jakarta Post*.

During the reporting period, the U.S. Embassy and consulates reached millions through the production of media programs that provided in-depth coverage of religious freedom issues from a U.S. perspective. These included the *Greetings from America* radio show, which periodically featured topics such as religious freedom, religious differences, tolerance, and pluralism from the perspective of Indonesian high school and college students living in the United States. This radio show aired 9 times a week to a potential audience of 10 million persons in 6 cities.

Through September 2007 the Embassy and consulates supported the publication of supplemental editions to a weekly magazine to provide objective information on the efforts of prodemocratic Islamic networks to support the democratic process, including religious freedom, tolerance, civil rights, and democracy. The magazine distributes 90,000 copies nationwide on a weekly basis with an estimated readership of 450,000 persons.

During the reporting period, the Embassy and consulates also supported campus seminar programs aimed at strengthening supporters of pluralism on Islamic campuses and reinforcing an understanding of religious freedom, tolerance, pluralism, and gender equity. Public discussions were held on several campuses in Jakarta, Serang, Rangkasbitung, Yogyakarta, Surabaya, Mataram, and Medan in cooperation with state Islamic universities and public universities, such as Gajah Mada University and the University of North Sumatra. More than 1,500 students from a wide range of backgrounds and 50 national and local speakers were involved in the discussions.

Implementers of the program RESPECT (Religious and Social Pluralism, Equity and Tolerance) convened a board of advisors of prominent civil rights advocates of religious freedom and minority rights. Program implementers held a series of community discussions to promote religious and social pluralism in targeted communities in the provinces of West Java, Central Java, and Banten. As part of this program, the Embassy and consulates worked with the Wahid Institute, an Islamic NGO founded by former President Wahid and dedicated in large part to promoting religious tolerance, to complete an assessment relating to national regulations that influence religious life and religious pluralism. The Embassy and consulates worked with the Center for the Study of Religion and Culture at the State Islamic University to assess the impact of Shari'a regulations in Tangerang.

The U.S. State Department funded a program on civic education that promoted religious tolerance. The program supported cooperative links among groups previously in conflict, in working to prevent sectarian violence. A State Department-funded program facilitated two-way exchange between religious scholars, clerics, and community leaders of Indonesia and the United States, examining the compatibility of religious practice and pluralism. Many programs supported by the State Department fostered interfaith cooperation among students and community leaders.

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